



The
Business
Council



GREATER
BINGHAMTON
CHAMBER OF COMMERCE



*Honorable Andrea Stewart-Cousins
Senate Majority Leader
Room 907 LOB
Albany, NY 12247*

*Honorable Carl Heastie
Assembly Speaker
Room 932 LOB
Albany, NY 12247*

Dear Senate Majority Leader Stewart-Cousins and Assembly Speaker Heastie,

We are writing to voice our opposition to Governor Cuomo's \$100 million tax on opioids. Few would argue that addiction treatment and prevention programs will be necessary to ending the epidemic in our state, but enacting this massive tax would have far-reaching consequences – from limited access to medications for patients who desperately need them to increased operational costs on neighborhood pharmacies and other employers across New York State.

Countless elected officials who represent our state have repeatedly pointed to healthcare costs as a critical issue, and rightfully so. On a per capita basis, New York is one of the highest spending states when it comes to health care. It's imprudent to think that raising costs on the companies who distribute pharmaceutical and medical supplies won't result in further increased costs for patients and providers.

Any tax policy that raises costs on the healthcare supply chain of New York State is bad for all aspects of the healthcare system. But increased healthcare costs would have a significant impact on our state's economy as a whole, as employers would pay more for their employees' healthcare coverage and consumers of legitimate opioids would have to

spend more out of their own pockets. Not to mention the effect that this tax could have on the bottom line of healthcare facilities, some of the largest job creators in communities throughout the state.

Lawmakers tried a similar strategy last year when they passed and attempted to implement the Opioid Stewardship Act. The law was ruled unconstitutional by a federal judge in Manhattan, who noted significant concerns with the possibility that the policy could have threatened access to medication and raised costs on patients.

The same consequences are at stake this time around, and we strongly encourage you to reject this harmful proposal.

Sincerely,

Business Council of New York State, Inc.
Unshackle Upstate
NFIB/NY
Capital Region Chamber of Commerce
Greater Binghamton Chamber of Commerce
North Country Chamber of Commerce
Seneca County Chamber of Commerce
Rockland Business Association